

## Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 1964

EXDIS

DEPARTMENT PASS SECRETARY'S PARTY

E. O. 11652; GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UR, US, XF

SUBJ: AMBASSADOR'S CALL ON MFA NEAR EAST COUNTRIES

DEPARTMENT CHIEF SYTENKO

REF: JERUSALEM 218

1. SUMMARY. MY CALL ON SYTENKO FEBRUARY 12 WAS NOT VERY PRODUCTIVE, SINCE HE WAS UNDER SEVERE CONSTRAINTS AS TO WHAT HE COULD SAY ON SUBSTANTIVE MATTERS. HE ASSERTED THAT AS A RESULT OF GROMYKO'S TRIP, IT IS CLEAR THE ARABS WANT THE GENEVA CONFERENCE RECONVENED. SYTENKO SAID THERE WAS NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN EGYPT'S POSITION THAT THE MEPC SHOULD RECONVENE "IMMEDIATELY" AND THE SYRIAN-SOVIET CALL FOR ITS RECONVENING IN FEBRUARY OR NOT LATER THAN EARLY MARCH. SYTENKO MAINTAINED THERE WAS NOTHING NEW ON THE PALESTINE QUESTION AND AVOIDED A DIRECT REPLY WHEN ASKED WHETHER GROMYKO'S REFERENCE TO A PALESTINE "STATE" SIGNIFIED ANY CHANGE IN SOVIET VIEWS. HE SAID THE CAIRO TALKS HAD GONE WELL BUT INDICATED THAT THE RESCHEDULING OF THE EGYPT'S DEBT IS STILL UNRESOLVED. HE CLAIMED THERE WAS STILL NO DEFINITE TIMING FOR A BREZHNEV MIDDLE EAST TRIP AND COLCLUDED WITH A SECOND STRONG PITCH FOR RECONVENING GENEVA. HE INDICATED GROMYKO WOULD STRESS RECONVENING THE MEPC WHEN HE SAW THE SECRETARY AND ALSO WOULD BE INTERESTED IN A DETAILED MUTUAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS OF THE MIDDLE EAST. END SUMMARY.

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2. GENEVA CONFERENCE. I ASKED SYTENKOWHAT HE COULD TELL ME ABOUT THE RESULTS OF GROMYKO'S RECENT TRIP TO THE MIDDLE EAST. SYTENKO, WHO IT MADE CLEAR HE WAS UNDER STRICT WRAPS, SAID THE IMPORTANT RESULTS HAD ALREADY BEEN PUBLISHED IN THE PRESS. DISCUSSION OF THE GENEVA CONFERENCE HAD SHOWN THAT THE ARABS WANT THE MEPC TO RECONVENE. IN SYRIA, HE SAID, IT HAD BEEN STATED THAT GENEVA SHOULD OPEN NOT LATER THEN FEBRUARY OR EARLY MARCH. THE EGYPTIANS HAD SAID THE CONFERENCE SHOULD REOPEN "IMMEDIATELY." ASKED IF THE ABSENCE FROM THE EGYPTIAN COMMUNIQUE OF A REFERENCE TO SPECIFIC TIMING REFLECTED SOME DIFFERENCE IN EGYPTIAN AND SYRIAN VIEWS, SYTENKO RESPONDED THERE WAS NO DIFFERENCE. THE SYRIANS HAD BEEN SOMEWHAT MORE PRECISE, HE SAID, BUT THE EGYPTIANS HAD SAID "IMMEDIATELY." THIS MEANS, HE ASSERTED, THAT EGYPT WANTS THE MEPC NOW AND THERE IS NO INCONSISTENCY WITH SYRIAN VIEWS.

3. PALESTINIANS. I ASKED ABOUT GROMYKO'S TALK WITH ARAFAT AND WHETHER THERE WAS ANYTHING NEW ON THE PALESTINE QUESTION. SYTENKO RESPONDED THAT THE SITUATION WAS UNCHANGED. THE PALESTINIANS HAVE TO BE CONSIDERED AND THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM RESOLVED. WHEN ASKED WHETHER GROMYKO'S REFERENCE IN DAMASCUS TO SOVIET SUPPORT FOR CREATION OF A PALESTINIAN "STATE" REPRESENTED SOME CHAGE IN SOVIET VIEWS, SYTENKO AVOIDED A DIRECT REPLY. ON THE PLO'S MOSCOW OFFICE SYTENKO AGAIN SAID THERE WAS NOTHING NEW. THE SOVIETS ARE WAITING FOR THE PALESTINIANS TO NOMINATE A REPRESENTATIVE.

4. SOVIET-EGYPTIAN RELATIONS. ON GROMYKO'S TALKS IN CAIRO, SYTENKO REFERRED TO SADAT'S PUBLIC STATEMENT THAT HE HAD BEEN PLEASED WITH THE TALKS, AND THAT GROMYKO'S VISIT HAD OPENED A NEW PAGE IN SOVIET-EGYPTIAN RELATIONS. ASKED ABOUT THE PROBLEM OF RESCHEDULING EGYPT7S DEBT, SYTENKO INDICATED THIS MATTER WAS STILL OPEN AND SAID IT WAS TO BE DISCUSSED AT THE MINISTERAIL LEVEL. ON OTHER MATTERS, HE IMPLIED ARMAMENTS HAD BEEN DISCUSSED BUT GAVE NO DETAILS. HE CONCLUDED BY SAYING THAT, OF COURSE, SOME PROBLEMS REMAINED WITH THE EGYPTIANS BUT THE VISIT HAD BEEN USEFUL.

5. BREZHNEV'S MIDDLE EAST TRIP. I NOTED SADAT HAD REFERRED TO BREZHNEV'S VISIT TO EGYPT AND ASKED IF THERE WAS ANYTHING CONFIDENTIAL

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DEFINITE ABOUT WHEN IT MIGHT TAKE PLACE. SYTENKO SAID IT WAS DIFFICULT TO SAY WHEN THE VISIT MIGHT OCCUR. THERE WAS STILL NO DEFINITE TIMING FOR IT.

6. MIDDLE EAST - GENEARL. I ASKED WHAT SYTENKO FELT GROMYKO WOULD WISH TO DISCUSS WITH THE SECRETARY IN GENEVA. SYTENKO AVOIDED A DIRECT REPLY, SAYING THE AGENDA WAS ALWAYS OPEN IN SUCH MEETINGS. HOWEVER, HE WENT ON, IN THE CONTEXT OF THE

MEETING WITH THE SECRETARY, TO MAKE A FURTHER PITCH FOR RECONVENING THE GENEVA CONFERENCE. THE USSR BELIEVES, HE SAID, THE MEPC MUST BE RESUMED. ITS RESUMPTION WOULD PUT AN END TO DIFFERING OPINIONS AMONG THE PARTIES AND TO EACH ONE BLAMING THE OTHER. RECONVENING GENEVA, HE SAID, WOULD NOT EXCLUDE THE PARTIES' TALKING INDIVIDUALLY OR THE U.S. TALKING TO ANY ONE OR MORE OF THEM. SO FAR AS RESULTS OF THE MEPC WERE CONCERNED, SYTENKO SAID THESE WOULD DEPEND ON THE AIMS OF THE PARTICIPANTS. IF THEY GO TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM, HE ASSERTED, IT WILL BE SOLVED. IF THEY GO TO DELAY A SETTLEMENT, IT WILL BE DELAYED. HOWEVER, THE SITUATION IS DETERIORATING AND THE LONGER IT IS PROLONGED, THE MORE DANGEROUS IT BECOMES.

7. U.S. ME ROLE. SYTENKO ASKED WHETHER I HAD ANY REPORT ON THE SECRETARY'S CURRENT TRIP, INDICATING THAT THE SOVIETS FEEL UNINFORMED ABOUT WHAT THE U.S. IS DOING. FOR EXAMPLE, HE SAID, THE ISRAELIES HAD BEEN IN WASHINGTON. THERE WERE MANY PRESS REPORTS ABOUT VARIOUS PLANS, BUT "WE WERE NOT TOLD ANYTHING." I SAID I HAD RECEIVED NO REPORTS ON THE SECRETARY'S TRIP. SYTENKO THEN SAID THAT HE ASSUMED THEY WOULD "HEAR ALL ABOUT IT" AT GENEVA AND THAT THE SOVIETS LOOKED FORWARD TO A FULL MUTUAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS THERE ON THE CURRENT SITUATION AND PROSPECTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

8. COMMENT: SYTENKO, WHO WILL ACCOMPANY GROMKY TO HIS MEETING WITH THE SECRETARY, OBVIOUSLY WAS UNDER CONSTRAINT TO SAY VERY LITTLE ABOUT GROMYKO'S VISIT TO THE MIDDLE EAST. IT SEEMED CLEAR, HOWEVER, THAT HE WANTED TO STRESS THAT AS A RESULT OF GROMYKO'S TALKS IN DAMASCUS AND CAIRO, THE SOVIETS NOW HAVE STRONG ARAB SUPPORT FOR RETUNING TO THE GENEVA CONVERENCE. GROMYKO CAN BE EXPECTED TO MAKE A STRONG PITCH ON THIS SUBJECT; FURTHERMORE, IT SEEMED CLEAR FROM SYTENKO'S REMARKS THAT THE SOVIETS WILL COME TO GENEVA HOPING TO LEARN IN SOME DETAIL ABOUT

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THE SECRETARY'S CONSULTATIONS IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND HIS VIEWS ON FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS.

STOESSEL

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED SECRETARY'S PARTY.

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